

An interview with Carleton L. Shideler

CARLETON L. SHIDELER

An Interview Conducted by

Joe Kish

July 20, 1981

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NARRATOR DATA SHEET

July 20, 1981
DATE

Name of narrator: Carleton L. "Speed" Shideler
Address: 1501 South 7th St., Terre Haute, IN 47802 Phone: 232-7633
Birthdate: June 26, 1900 Birthplace: Muncie, IN
Length of residence in Terre Haute: 80 years
Education: Attended Garfield High School

Occupational history: Automobile business, petroleum business, trucking business, Executive Secretary of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce, Twigg Industries

Special interests, activities, etc. Very active member and officer of the Elks (B.P.O.E.) at local, state and national levels

Major subject(s) of interview: Terre Haute area--automobile businesses, truck lines, industry, Elks

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Interviewing sessions:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interviewer</u>
07/20/81	2:00 P.M.	Mr. Shideler's home	Joe Kish

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C. L. 'SPEED' SHIDELER

Born in Muncie, Indiana, June 26, 1900. Moved to Terre Haute in 1901 when his father came to help build the Highland Iron & Steel Company. He attended the Terre Haute City Schools, Garfield High School and took a Sales Course at Northwestern University. In his early business career, he was associated with the Highland Iron & Steel Company. In 1923, he started the first inter-city truck line between Terre Haute and Indianapolis. This was known as the Old Trails Express Company and it expanded very rapidly. In 1926, he sold out and went into the automobile business, petroleum sales business and allied lines. In 1944, he became Executive Vice-President of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce and remained there until 1952 when he joined Twigg Industries, Brazil, Indiana, as Personnel and Public Relations Director. In 1959, he became Executive Secretary of Mid-West Ready-Mixed Concrete Association. He retired from this position April 30, 1972.

'Speed' became an Elk and a member of Masonic Lodge #19 in the summer of 1921 and in 1923 he joined the Scottish Rite and the Shrine. In 1931-1932 he served as Exalted Ruler of the Terre Haute, Indiana Elks Lodge #86. In 1934 he was elected Secretary of the Terre Haute Elks Lodge. He retired from this position April 2, 1980.

In 1939 'Speed' was elected Secretary of the Indiana Elks Association, a position he held until retirement June 8, 1980.

In 1944, he became a member of the Royal Order of Jesters. In 1946-1947 he served as President of the Terre Haute Rotary Club. During his term as President, he assisted in the forming of the Goodwill-Good-Turn Annual Drive which is still active. In 1958-1959 he served as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler of the BPOElks, USA. In 1960-1961 he served as Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight of the BPOElks of the USA, and from 1963 'til 1969 served as a member of the Grand Lodge State Associations Committee of the BPOElks, USA, and in 1969-1970 served as its chairman. In 1970-1971 and 1971-1972 he served as a member of the Elks Grand Lodge Activities Committee. He has been an Honorary Life Member of Terre Haute Lodge since 1936 and also a Life Member of the Masons, Consistory and Shrine in Terre Haute. He has been awarded an Honorary Life Membership in Anderson, Indiana and New Castle, Indiana Elks Lodges and a Life Membership in Whiting, Indiana Lodge. Also, the city of Whiting and the Mayor of Whiting, James B. Grenchik, presented Shideler with an Honorary Citizens Award of Whiting, Indiana on December 23, 1979. Also the city of Lafayette, Indiana, and its mayor, Honorable James F. Rieble, presented Shideler with an Honorary Citizens Award of Lafayette, Indiana on October 18, 1980.

'Speed' is a Sagamore of the Wabash, a Kentucky Colonel and Assistant to the Keeper of the Great Seal of North Carolina which are honorary awards. He also is an Honorary Life Member of the Mid-West Ready-Mixed Concrete Association.

During his lifetime, he has been active in civic activities such as Goodwill Industries, Red Cross, Florence Crittenton Home, Terre Haute Baseball Fans Association, Boy Scouts, Community Chest and others.

'Speed' is married and has one daughter, Mrs. Sam Slaven, two stepdaughters, Mrs. J.R. (Norma) Wedel, Atlanta, Georgia; Mrs. R.F. (Betty) Orman, Crown Point, Indiana; one stepson, Robert E. Buck, Brazil, Indiana; four granddaughters; six stepgranddaughters and five stepgrandsons, four great grandchildren and eleven step great grandchildren. One stepson, Raymond Buck died in 1976.

CARLETON L. SHIDELER

Tape 1

July 20, 1981

Mr. Shideler's residence--1501 South 7th St., Terre Haute, IN

INTERVIEWER: Joseph E. Kish

TRANSCRIBER: Kathleen M. Skelly

For: Vigo County Oral History Program

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JEK: This is Joe Kish. I am with the Oral History Committee of Vigo County, and I am talking today with Carleton L. "Speed" Shideler at his home at 1501 South 7th Street in Terre Haute.

How are you today, Speed?

SHIDELER: Pretty good, Joe, thank you. And you?

JEK: Just fine.

Want to talk to you a little bit about yourself and about Terre Haute. Are you a native of this area? Were you born here? And about when was your birthday? {laughs}

SHIDELER: No, Joe, I was born in Muncie, Indiana, on June 26, 1900. A year later, my father with three other gentlemen from out of town -- Walter C. Ely, John L. Smith and William Myers -- came to Terre Haute and built the Highland Iron & Steel Company. And, we have been residents of Terre Haute since 1901.

JEK: What company was that?

SHIDELER: Highland Iron & Steel Company. That was then later sold to the American Chain Company.

JEK: And what did they make particularly?

SHIDELER: Particularly, when they opened they made built what they called a rolling mill. They made iron flats and angles and this sort of thing, through rollers. It was a heated iron processing deal, and they made different kinds of metal iron.

JEK: Where was this located -- the plant?

SHIDELER: At 28th Street and Fourth Avenue.

JEK: Twenty-eighth and Fourth Avenue.

And about how many employees did they have?

SHIDELER: Well, of course, from the beginning, nothing until they got up to 400 people, generally speaking.

JEK: Um hm. Sizeable industry.

SHIDELER: Yes.

JEK: Now, has it met its demise? Is it still going?

SHIDELER: No. As I say, it was sold to the American Chain Company a number of years ago. American Chain continued to operate the thing, and then later it was sold to two men who have died. The plant is no longer in operation.

JEK: I see. Well, that's interesting. That's the first I ever (laughs) heard of that. I've been here in Terre Haute a while myself.

Now, were you educated then in Terre Haute?

SHIDELER: Yes.

JEK: The local schools?

SHIDELER: Yes. I went to Garfield High School and . . .

JEK: Class of?

SHIDELER: No. I quit in my junior year. Then, I took some sales promotion experiences through Northwestern University and that sort of thing and was involved in sales, which I was always interested in. I attended but I didn't graduate from high school.

JEK: Um hm. Well, that's amazing. (laughs)
You're a very successful man in the community.

So, what kind of positions have you held then?

SHIDELER: Well, I've been sales manager of automobile businesses here in Terre Haute. I was associated with some names that you may be familiar with. Ray Butter's Ford Agency and Nichols Motor Company.

JEK: Where were these located if you can tell?

SHIDELER: Ray Butter's was located at 6½ and Ohio which

SHIDELER: now is Herb Mace Service, Inc..

JEK: What year are we talking about?

SHIDELER: Nineteen . . . let me think about it. Nine-
teen . . . about 1921. Along in there.

Nichols' Motor Company was located on South
5th Street just south of Wabash Avenue in the old
. . . it was called the Nichols Building.

JEK: I see.

SHIDELER: Across from that eating place Hill's Snappy
Service there on 5th Street, you know?

JEK: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

SHIDELER: I've forgotten who's in there right now.

JEK: On 5th?

SHIDELER: Yeah. On the west side of the street just
north of the alley there between Wabash and Cherry,
large brick building.

JEK: I know where you're talking about, yes.

SHIDELER: And so . . . and then I was sales manager for
Frank Jones Motor Car Company, and they were located
at 7th and Mulberry. And that was Pontiac and Oak-
land.

SHIDELER: Did you ever hear of Oakland?

JEK: Yes, I did! (laughs)

SHIDELER: Well . . . and then when I left there, I went
with Indian Refining Company.

JEK: What kind of company is that? In Terre Haute?

SHIDELER: Yeah, yeah. Of course, they were originally
. . . I mean their head office was at Lawrenceville.
It was a gasoline and oil company -- Indian Refining.

JEK: I see.

SHIDELER: And, they sold gasoline and motor oil and that
sort of thing, like any company in that business.

SHIDELER: And then Mid-Continent /Petroleum Corporation, 500 North 14th Street/ moved into Terre Haute, and I went with Mid-Continent then through some persuasion and stayed with them until 19 . . . let's see, until about 1940.

And I joined . . . I became the executive vice president of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce at that time. So . . .

JEK: Um hm. What years did you serve with the Chamber then?

SHIDELER: Well, from 1940 to 1948 /actually from 1944-1952/.

JEK: 'Forty-eight. Eight years.

SHIDELER: Um hm. A little over eight years.

Then I went with Twigg Industries at Brazil. /I was/ personnel manager and public relations manager at that plant over there.

JEK: Now, for the sake of those who would be listening to this, Twigg Industries is involved in what kind of industry. /They are no longer in business./

SHIDELER: Airplane parts.

JEK: Airplane parts.

SHIDELER: Yeah, they made parts for airplane companies and this sort of thing. And they occupied the old . . . oh, what was the name of that property? Out east on the south side of the main street there.

JEK: Wasn't clay and tile was it?

SHIDELER: No. No. No. That's terrible to not remember that. But this was on East National Avenue on the . . . /the Carna-var Company/

JEK: U.S. 40.

SHIDELER: Yeah, on the south side.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: They remained in business

SHIDELER: Then I left there . . . I was with them about 5-6 years, and I left them then and came back to Terre Haute and went into business for myself -- in the automobile accessory business.

I might go back just a little bit, if I may. In my real early years, about 1917, after I -- as I said -- quit school, Garfield, I went to work at this plant where my father and these other gentlemen had built and was with them for quite a long while. Well, I ran electric cranes and . . .

JEK: Um hm. Highland Steel?

SHIDELER: Highland Iron & Steel Company, right. Yeah.

So, my life has been diversified to some extent. Another company that I was associated with that you may remember the name was Power Supply Company ^(9 1/2) and Mulberry Streets⁷. I don't know if that rings a bell with you or not. They were mine, mill, and factory suppliers -- wholesalers. And, I worked with them locally and then travelled for them, too.

So, my life has been doing a few different things. It's not because, particularly, that I lost my job -- I want to say this (laughs) -- but things . . .

JEK: New challenges!

SHIDELER: . . . things developed that made it more interesting and these are some of the reasons for the . . .

JEK: If you can hearken back a little bit, I . . . as you talked about the different things you did, what did automobiles sell for when you first started selling for the Ford agency? Do you recall that at all?

SHIDELER: Yes, I can come fairly close.

JEK: Was that the model-A you're talking about that you sold?

SHIDELER: Model-A and model-T. I sold model-T's.

JEK: About what did they cost? Do you have any idea? I think it'd be interesting today to know what those

JEK: first . . . those cars back . . . cost back in the '20s.

SHIDELER: A Ford model-T back at that time would sell for someplace around \$600-\$700 about 1919-1920.

JEK: My goodness!

SHIDELER: And . . .

JEK: Was that the crank type in the front or was that . . .

SHIDELER: The T's were, yes.

JEK: Yes.

SHIDELER: The A's though, they were self-starters, you know what I mean?

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: And I sold Dodges and Chryslers and -- as I said -- Oaklands and Pontiacs. I was sales manager for Jones Motor Car Company.

JEK: Um hm. Oaklands didn't last very long, did they?

SHIDELER: No. Of course, that was made by Pontiac.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: And . . .

JEK: Was another name for that Overland?

SHIDELER: No. No, no. There was an Overland made. Overland, by the way, the original Overland was made in Terre Haute.

JEK: Is that right?

SHIDELER: Yes, sir. Out at the old wheel works at 13th Street and Plum.

JEK: Is that right?

SHIDELER: And they moved then and . . .

JEK: About when was that, Speed?

SHIDELER: That would be in . . .

JEK: Late 'teens, early 'twenties?

SHIDELER: I would say late 'teens.

JEK: Late 'teens?

SHIDELER: Yeah.

JEK: Um hm.

SHIDELER: Then, a lot of things happened that have been most interesting in my life -- businesswise and that sort of thing.

For your information, which I don't know that you are familiar with, I started the first truck line -- intercity truck line -- ever.

JEK: In this community?

SHIDELER: In this community between Terre Haute and Indianapolis.

JEK: What was it called?

SHIDELER: Old Trails Express Company. And we operated between Terre Haute and Indianapolis. My partner and I had a funny experience. The way we went into business while I was working . . . or while he and I both were working for Ray Butter's agency, the Ford dealer. We had a sales meeting each morning. And this particular morning it was raining like the dickens. So after the sales meeting, just unconsciously, he and I walked up to the front window and were looking out at the rain and so forth. And a model-T Ford went by on Ohio Street going west and all it had on the side of the body was . . . and this was a one-ton model-T truck, and up on the panel of the body it had a . . . where the nameplate goes, it just had one word and /it/ said "Express" on there. I can remember this so well. And, the peculiar thing was that I had never given any thought to being interested in a truck line, for some reason. But when that thing went along on Ohio Street, I said to Louie Hays (who became my partner), "There'd be a good business."

And he said, "What's that?"

SHIDELER: And I said, "An express truck line. There goes a truck. Between Terre Haute and Indianapolis."

And he and I were in business the next day.

JEK: (laughs heartily)

SHIDELER: And we bought a used one ton Ford model-T to go into business with.

JEK: One-ton model-T truck, huh?

SHIDELER. Yes, sir. That was our first truck. We . . .

JEK: Did it grow . . . develop from there?

SHIDELER: Oh, yes. From nothing to . . . I don't want to go into detail of what caused this thing on Mike here, but I'll tell you later personally what it was if you'd like to hear.

You said, "Did we grow?" We grew terribly fast. Our income was all being placed back into the business for more equipment.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: And this was before the National Road was paved if you will recall, and it wasn't nearly so easy to go between Terre Haute and Indianapolis as it is today.

JEK: You're talking about U.S. 40 now when you say the old National Road.

SHIDELER: That's right. That's right. It was a long time before Interstate 70.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: And a long time before it was paved. We've had some very, very bad accidents. Fortunately, we never had an accident that hurt anybody particularly and seriously at all. And in the winter-time . . . Putnamville is an example that everybody was familiar with at that time. It was called the Putnamville overpass there. And that wasn't paved, and in icy weather to get trucks up and over that thing was not easy. And we've had some trucks in bad positions there and other places, too. We

SHIDELER: had trucks burn up and all this sort of thing like other companies later on had. But we were the first ones to start; and as I said, it was named Old Trails Express Company.

We continued in this until 1926, at which time then my father had joined us in this venture because we needed more money. We were buying equipment all the time. So, it finally became necessary . . . not through financial or anything like this, it became necessary to sell out. So, we did. And, unfortunately, after we sold out, the company never operated again.

JEK: My goodness.

SHIDELER: A name that was well-known in Terre Haute in trucking was the Eastern Express Company begun by a man by the name of House. He had his own truck at that time and he . . .

JEK: John H. House?

SHIDELER. Yes. And he did quite a little work for us on contract work. Then later on after we had sold out and the people who bought it . . . bought dad's and my shares . . . Louis remained in the company as it was. As I say, they didn't operate and they didn't do any of the business. And then house, he was successful in getting the permit -- state permit. He then started a trucking company of his own. So that was an experience.

Man, I'm telling you! There were lots of times, lots of times during that period from '23 'til '26 that I was involved in this thing that I would go down to the office at 7 o'clock one morning and never get a lick of sleep until the third night afterward, for example. We were just busy covering. We were hauling meat from Home Packing Company First and Chestnut Streets. We were hauling tomatoes and cucumbers from Davis Gardens. We were hauling strawberries from out at Sanford. We were hauling anything. I mean we had a warehouse at 2nd and Chestnut, and we had a warehouse in Indianapolis.

JEK: My goodness.

Tape 1

SHIDELER: And what it actually was, was store-door delivery. In other words, we would haul meat out of Home Packing Company here. We'd load at night and leave here around 3 o'clock in the morning. And then we would deliver the meat over there to the markets that it was assigned to. And it was what we called store-door delivery then.

And it built and built and built rapidly. And, as I said before, we were investing all of our income for more equipment all the time.

Our mechanic and I went to Indianapolis one time to buy some more equipment and while there we bought two new Macks -- six-wheelers, you know. Two trucks, yeah, trucks . . . the truck and the body, too, you know. The mechanic drove one of these Macks home. He brought it back to Terre Haute so he could load it that night and start it back to Indianapolis. We left the other new one over at Indianapolis to be loaded that night at the warehouse and bring it to Terre Haute.

Well, this happened too frequently unfortunately. About 5 o'clock in the morning (this was before I was married) our telephone rang at home. I had gotten used to listening for telephone calls all the time from off the road or truck burned up or something. So I went to the phone and recognized the driver's voice immediately who was bringing that new truck back. And he said, "Speed, I had a little bad luck. And I said, "What do you mean?"

SHIDELER: He said, "I'm turned over out here at Glenn grade."

JEK: Oh, my goodness.

SHIDELER: I said, "Are you hurt?" He said, "No. No. I'm all right. I'm all right." I said, "What did you have on?" Well, he called out the amount of weight; he remembered that that he had on. It was a bunch. And I said, "Anything valuable?" "Well," he said, "when I left Indianapolis, I had scenery for the Indiana theater." And I said, "Where was that when you left?" He said, "On top." I said, "Where is it now?" He said, "On the bottom." The

SHIDELER: truck had turned completely over, down that grade at Glenn.

So, my dad got up with me /and/ we went out. And before you ever got to the thing, you could see it turned over and the wheels up in the air. So, then we had to get some wreckers and got a couple of our other trucks and hooked onto it. And we had to unload that thing upside down and up a grade. Push it up or carry it up or . . . you know. And that was quite an experience, (laughs) I'll tell you.

JEK: Yes, it was.

SHIDELER: But . . .

JEK: Old Trails.

SHIDELER: Old Trails Express Company, yeah. My mother named that. We studied about names and called out names and thought of names. Finally she came up with the suggestion that why don't you call it Old Trails Express Company, 'cause that's what they called the National Road.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: So, Louie and I, we both agreed and thought that was a pretty good idea. So, we did that and our signs were all red, white, and blue. Old Trails Express.

JEK: Well, Terre Haute has been quite a trucking center and to think that you had one of the first trucking . . .

SHIDELER: We had the first intercity truck line.

JEK: . . . intercity truck, and not it's interstate and national.

SHIDELER: Yes, oh, I should say so!

You were asking about costs of cars and this sort of thing. This was during my experience with the Chamber of Commerce. I had sold my car that I had at that time and had made up my mind to buy a Cadillac. So, I went over to Harvey Froderman. At this time cars were a little difficult to get.

SHIDELER: There was a demand for all automobiles. This was in 19 . . .

JEK: 'Forties?

SHIDELER: Yeah. Nineteen /hundred/ forty-six, when I sold this car of mine. So, there wasn't anything I could do. I had to take my turn and, as I say, we were living in the Deming /Hotel/ at the time, and so I ordered one. And what it was, I wouldn't need a car 'cause we were living right there at the Deming. But in a few days, I decided I'd better have one. Things turned up that I needed a car, and I didn't have any.

So, I went back over to Harvey Froderman and I said, "I want to buy a car, and I want to buy the cheapest one you have cause I'm just going to use this until you get my Cadillac." And I bought a Chevrolet, 4-passenger -- one of those coupe deals, you know.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: Cost me \$975.

JEK: Used?

SHIDELER: No, no. Brand new! Yeah, \$975 for that thing. I was keeping it in the garage there -- Deming /Hotel/ garage. There was a rent-a-car deal in the same building, operated by the man that ran the garage. And he kept needling me. He wanted to buy that. So, I said no, hell, I bought it to use. He said, "Hell, you don't use it! You leave it sitting here most of the time." I said, "Well, it's there if I need it."

Well, he kept riding me and riding me and riding me about that thing. So, I kept it until I got delivery on my Cadillac which was two years later. That was . . . come my turn was two years. So, I had both those cars then over in the garage. This guy kept needling me 'cause it wasn't being used very much. He knew the condition of the car. It was perfect.

And he said one day after he'd been riding

SHIDELER: me for some time, he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do with you." (I paid \$975 for the car.) He said, "I'll give you \$1500 for your car."

JEK: (laughs)

SHIDELER: I stood there in a daze for a minute. I said, "Now, you've been riding me about that car, and I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll sell it to you for \$1750." And he says, "I'll take it."

JEK: (laughs heartily)

SHIDELER: I sold him the Chevrolet that had cost \$975 and I'd used it for two years, for \$1750. That was an experience that was a little different than most that you have with automobiles.

JEK: (continuing to laugh) The auto industry wished you were like it. They would have had plenty of buyers.

SHIDELER: Oh, yes, sir.

JEK: Well, where did you ever get the nickname of Speed?

SHIDELER: Well, (laughs) this shouldn't be put on tape. Not that I was doing anything

A friend of mine who was then living is now deceased, he and I were sitting in a bar having a beer. Two girls came into this place and as they walked by where we were sitting -- this sounds like a made-up story, but it isn't . . .

JEK: (laughs)

SHIDELER: . . . one of these girls said to the other one, "There's Speed Shideler and Oney Martin." And we heard them. This is Oney Martin whose folks used to be in the funeral director business up at Twelve Points.

JEK: Yes, yes.

SHIDELER: He thought that was a big joke. He sure

SHIDELER: thought that was funny. And then guys started calling me Speed. And that's where it came from. It just grew from his constant calling me Speed.

JEK: My goodness. Usually, there's a reason for them.

SHIDELER: Yes.

JEK: Now, you've been intimately associated with the Elks and locally, state-wide, and nationally. Could you kind of give us a resume of when you first joined the Elks and positions you've held with all of your organizations?

SHIDELER: Well, I . . .

JEK: I know they had a big event for you at the Elks club recently. You're "Mr. Elk" in the United States, I'd say. (laughs)

SHIDELER: Of course, I'm called other things. (laughs)

JEK: (laughs heartily)

SHIDELER: But, I was initiated in the Elks locally here in 1921. My father gave me a membership in the Elks and the Masons for my 21st birthday in 1921. That was in October for the Elks. I went into the Masons at the same time. But, I got involved in . . . interested in working in the Elks deal. So then I became Exalted Ruler of the local lodge in 1931 and '32. And served at that time.

Then, in 1934, I was elected secretary. So, I served then as secretary of the local lodge continuously from 1934 to last year.

JEK: Nineteen hundred eighty. Forty-six years.

SHIDELER: Yeah. Forty-six years.

State-wide . . . then I was elected secretary of the state association in 1939 at the Evansville convention, and I served in that capacity until 19 . . . until last year. And I've served . . .

JEK: Forty-one years?

SHIDELER: I've served on national committees and national offices such as district deputy, grand exalted ruler,

SHIDELER: things of that kind during the interim there. I don't recall offhand, just verbatim, dates but [it was] during my service there in 1934. That's wrong. It was when I was exalted ruler in 1932, we signed a lease for the Fort Harrison Country Club for five years with an option to buy.

JEK. In '32.

SHIDELER: They were . . . like a lot of things, they weren't financially . . . not too . . .

JEK. The Fort Harrison Country Club, you say?

SHIDELER: It was the Fort Harrison Country Club.

JEK. A private club?

SHIDELER: Yes. It was a private club.

So, we signed this option to lease for five years with an option to buy. At the end of the option, we bought. And then it became . . . we became owners of the Elks Fort Harrison Country Club.

JEK: Um hm. Was there a golf course there at that time?

SHIDELER: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. It was a . . . I never could understand for sure why they wanted to sell, but they did for some reason. So we took advantage of it. I recall the first year we had it we lost about \$1700 overall operation. Well, this I didn't like at all.

JEK: You're talking about operation of the city club and the country club?

SHIDELER: Well, yes. That's right.

I proposed to the officers and members that we put on a fair out there -- tents and all that sort of thing, free acts, balloon ascension . . . They said -- some of them said -- well, you're nuts. I said, "Yeah, I know, but I still want to do this other. I want to put this on."

SHIDELER: Well, we fussed about this, and they finally agreed. We had lost \$1700, remember, on this first year deal. So, they agreed and then after they had agreed and Dr. McIntosh . . . did you ever know him?

JEK: I know the name, but I did not know him.

SHIDELER: Well, he was very active in the Elks here and a nice gentleman. He and I, along with Dr. Irwin -- a local dentist here who is now still in business here -- we went to Chicago. We hired some acts for our fair the next year. Balloon ascension and high-wire acts and all that sort of thing.

I went down to Ike Ades who was in the Terre Haute Tent and Awning business . . .

JEK: Um hm, um hm.

SHIDELER: . . . whom I knew quite well. And talked to him about this thing and asked him what we would have to do to get him to build a new tent in our lodge colors, purple and white. He said, "Just tell me the size."

I told him what we had talked about. And he built this new tent which . . . I do forget the size of that thing, but it was enormous. He had it in purple and white. Then we put booths in that thing for this fair deal. Now, we had several other tents.

Well, the theory of the thing, of course, was due to the fact that we had lost the money the previous year, we . . . as I had said, "Let's make it before we lose it this year." Well, we had a net profit on that thing of \$7300.

JEK: My goodness!

SHIDELER: So, this proved all right and worked out O.K.

JEK: Now, at the time that the Elks acquired [it], was there a structure on the site?

SHIDELER: Oh, yes. Not the one that's there now. No,

SHIDELER: there was a . . .

JEK: But the original . . .

SHIDELER: That's right. It was definitely a country club and . . .

JEK: Now, why did you choose that rural site? Because of the country club?

SHIDELER: Yeah. There was the golf course and that sort of thing. It was available.

JEK: Now, this was the old Fort Harrison site?

SHIDELER: That's right.

JEK: Now, to my recollection, the old country club that you acquired did have some walls supposedly from the old fort. Is that right?

SHIDELER: That's right.

JEK: Now, are they in the new structure . . .

SHIDELER: Yes.

JEK: . . . for those that would not know about old Fort Harrison, are there any remains of the old fort in the new structure?

SHIDELER: Right. Right. As you go into the club, going in the front door either to the right as you go back to the lounge or to the left as you go back to the lounge, when you get back to the lounge itself on the west side of the hall and on the east side of the hall are posts about like that (illustrating with his hands) . . .

JEK: Wooden posts?

SHIDELER: Yes. On each side of the lounge which is part of the lounge . . .

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: . . . which are parts of the old fort. And these posts are made out of the old fort posts.

JEK: Um hm. Now, is there anything more remaining

JEK: from the old fort?

SHIDELER: Well, we have some of this stuff in our storage barn and . . .

JEK. What about those small . . . they look like small cannons or something of that sort? Are those . . .

SHIDELER: No.

JEK: No. Those are just decorative, added later?

SHIDELER: That's right. Then, we have what they call the Fort Harrison cannon, which is a golf deal each year.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: And that cannon thing has been used for that purpose.

But they were not part of it.

JEK: What about the Coon Hunt?

SHIDELER: Well . . .

JEK: Was that another one of your brainstorms or were you associated with it?

SHIDELER: No, it wasn't mine entirely. It was a group deal. It was . . .

JEK: When was that started and who participated and how long did it last?

SHIDELER: Well, it was . . .

JEK: What did you actually do it to?

SHIDELER: (laughing) Do you want to know everything?

JEK. Well, I didn't strictly come up . . .

SHIDELER: Well, it was a fun thing actually. They played roulette and big six. It was a fun day.

JEK: Um hm.

SHIDELER: Served drinks and all that sort of a thing. And, of course, they had golf tournaments and things like this went on. It was open to, actually, to the public.

JEK: Well, was there actually any hunting for raccoons?

SHIDELER: Oh, no, no. That was just a name.

JEK: Just a name. (laughs)

SHIDELER: Yes. That reminds me what you said. When I was with Mid-Continent, on the day of the Coon Hunt I had a call from one of my dealers in Crawfordsville. He wanted me to come up there. Well, this was the day of the Coon Hunt, too.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: So, I told him I'd be up right away. I went up and when I drove into his service station, attached to the air stand there were two dogs chained on that thing. And I said to this fellow, "Gee, where'd you get the dogs." "Well," he said, "the guy's headed down your way that owns those dogs. He said he's going down to the Coon Hunt."

JEK: (laughs heartily)

SHIDELER: So, he was actually going to go coon hunting! But, no, they didn't have . . .

JEK: No raccoons?

SHIDELER: No, they didn't have any. It was just a . . .

JEK: Just wore the coats in those days, huh?
(laughs)

SHIDELER: Just a name, yeah.

JEK: Well, we talked about you and your many associations and positions in Terre Haute, what about the Terre Haute area -- the people? What are some of your earliest remembrances of people? The kind of businesses and industry? The economy of this community? Could you kind of comment on

JEK: this? The recreational, cultural facilities?
What are your earliest remembrances in some of
these areas?

SHIDELER: Well, based on my experiences in Terre Haute
and friends that I have had the pleasure of knowing
and being associated with and all this sort of
thing, I have loved Terre Haute.

JEK: Its people?

SHIDELER: Yes, indeed. Of course, you have all kind of
people everywhere.

JEK. Right.

SHIDELER: But generally speaking, I have always thought
that Terre Haute was a pretty doggoned good com-
munity.

JEK: You're still with us, and we like you. We
don't want you ever to leave us. (laughs)

SHIDELER. But, sometimes you get a bad apple in a bushel,
you know. These are things you can't help. But
overall, I think Terre Haute's been a good town.
My experiences and close association with the busi-
ness end of the thing was, of course, during my
regime in the Chamber of Commerce. And I had the
pleasure of working with a lot of nice people. An
old, old friend, a devoted member of this community
and one who has done a lot in the past for Terre
Haute -- and I speak about Tony Hulman. Unfortunately,
too frequently people like to talk about someone who
has a lot of money and is doing things for your
community, and they don't know what they're talking
about.

I remember distinctly one time my wife -- my
first wife -- and I were going to Washington, D.C.
to attend the National Chamber of Commerce convention.
The night before, Tony, George Carroll, and I had
gone to Marshall, Illinois, to a Chamber of Commerce
meeting over there to try to help them. And while
there, we got a telephone call advising that there
was a man here in Terre Haute from Allis Chalmers
Company. He was wanting to . . . well, he asked
for me. Of course, my name was involved in the thing.

SHIDELER: So, I asked them to have him wait, and we'd be back right away.

So, we came back. We had been working with them. Tony was very, very much involved in a lot of things regarding the good of this community, as were a lot of other people. But, this man was here to advise us and announce that Allis Chalmers was coming to Terre Haute. They had agreed and had decided. He didn't want to tell the newspaper this until he told us. So, as I said, now my wife and I were going to Washington the next morning to the national convention of the Chamber of Commerce, and I'd called a cab to pick us up. One of my desires -- and we worked on it pretty thoroughly and finally got some of the things straightened out -- was to inform and keep informed those who had close contact with people from out of the city. And certainly it was taxicab drivers. So, I had had meetings with the cab drivers and things like this and asked them to cooperate and tell things. Well, this particular morning this cab came to pick us up. I said to this fellow, whom I knew because I had met with him and the others, "Did you see the headline in this morning's paper?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "About Allis Chalmers coming to Terre Haute."

Then he said, "Yeah." He said, "Tony Hulman didn't have anything to do with that though, I know." And I said, "This is the trouble with this town. People like you instead of knowing what you're talking about, you take it for granted and say your own piece before you find out. I recommend highly that you discontinue this. Find out what you're talking about if you want to be smart."

So, he apologized for what he had said and this sort of thing. But, these are some of the things that happened that you had to work on consistently, trying to get them to react properly. We whipped that thing in pretty good shape, I think. Oh, you always have . . . as we said a while ago, a bad apple. But, we got people pretty well understanding what was right and what was wrong and how you should approach it and this sort of thing.

JEK.

Now, your association with the Chamber and, of course, being in the business, also, how do you view the change in the business and industry in

JEK: the community, if you view it as such and the general economy of the community? Basically, we were a mining area before. Is that right?

SHIDELER: Yes. That's right. That's very definitely right. Yeah.

Of course, Terre Haute has been pretty well represented as a whole on industry. You know what I mean. Like Highland Iron and Steel Company, Turner Glass Company. You probably don't remember them either. And others like this. We had all kind of business in Terre Haute.

The unfortunate thing, I think -- and you're asking me and I'm honest when I try to answer your questions -- I surely hate to see things happening in Terre Haute downtown.

JEK: Um hm. What is your feeling? Since you speak about that, what do you look for the future . . . or what would you propose the future of the downtown area be?

SHIDELER: Well, I don't know that I'm in position to give any criticism or What I mean about this, Joe, is that I think there wasn't enough real interest in the merchants group where it got to the position where so many things have been torn down, down there. With the spread of malls and shopping centers and things like this that's going on, I am terribly afraid it's going to be most difficult to get Terre Haute back on . . .

JEK: You mean the downtown?

SHIDELER: Downtown area, right, yeah. They're doing a lot of business in these malls as you know. But, gee, it just makes you sick to see all of the vacant property! And the cost on buildings and things like this. I don't think it's going to be easy.

JEK: Do you think it's possible?

SHIDELER: Well, anything is possible, I guess.

JEK: With the razing of as many structures as they have razed in the downtown area, does that just open the prospect for a downtown mall?

SHIDELER: Well, of course, there's been some talk about that as you know, I'm sure. Of course, there's lots of things involved. Number one you've got to find a corporation or an individual or someone who is qualified, capable and will do something about it. You don't build those malls for nothing. That's for sure! I expect a mall downtown would cost considerably more per square foot than one out in the country. So, this makes a difference now. We're just going through an expansion as you well know and everybody else knows -- this J. C. Penney Company deal. The expansion out there at Honey Creek /Square7. Well now, all of these additions and things like this, in my opinion, puts them farther away from getting conditions changed to the betterment of downtown.

JEK: I see. Do you think that anything -- cost of oil and gasoline -- will have any bearing on our mode of transportation in the future which may spell a different kind of merchandising economy than we have now?

SHIDELER: Of course, Joe, with things going on like they are today, it's most difficult for anybody to make an accredited decision. By this I mean . . .

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1--SIDE 2

SHIDELER: . . . the future of Terre Haute, I believe, depends upon (I'm talking about the downtown area) . . . depends upon the merchants of downtown today -- what they can do, what they will do, what they want to do, or what they don't want to do. Because you know that the people in the outlying districts aren't going to sacrifice what they have invested in these places to come back downtown. It scares me actually.

JEK: Um hm.

SHIDELER: I'd like to ask you what you think, but I'm not going to. (laughs)

JEK: That's not . . . no.

Do you have any suggestions you might make for the future growth and development of this area?

JEK: You're in the Chamber, you worked with companies who established themselves here.

SHIDELER: Well, people . . . like I mentioned about Tony Hulman as an example a while ago, there are other people who devoted a lot of time to our community. Ben Blumberg was one who was most considerate about the conditions that Terre Haute . . . worked his hands off for the good of the community. A lot of other people were in the same category that did a lot of things for the good of Terre Haute. I don't believe that these people or people like them today have the opportunity or the choice of getting involved like they did, because it's so spread out now, if you know what I mean.

JEK: Um hm.

SHIDELER: You have it north, you have it south, you have it east. Before it was downtown and it was all downtown until the spread commenced to grow and build. I don't profess to know everything, but . . . and I hoped that I'd be wrong when I said I am definitely afraid of the future of downtown Terre Haute.

JEK: Well, let's leave it there.

SHIDELER: All right. (laughs)

JEK: Finally, in summation then, Speed, you've had many memories here in Terre Haute. What are some of the fondest memories you have of this community?

SHIDELER: Joe, there are just so many things as I said a while ago. People, I love people. I have all my life, and I hope to continue in the future -- which I'm sure I will. The people are the most important things in any community. What types they are, how cooperative they are, and all of these things working together is how you accomplish things. I've had some great experiences in my life in Terre Haute with some great people who have been willing to devote their time and efforts, money, and everything else to make Terre Haute a good city. This may come back but the unfortunate thing is that some of those that . . . most of those that I have mentioned aren't here any more. We don't have

SHIDELER: them to ask for help. We can't look forward to them doing anything because they're not in position. They're gone /deceased/.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: I certainly . . . certainly wish the best of everything for the entire community. I don't want to see the malls, the shopping centers, go broke and torn down. I don't think that's fair. But by the same token, I'd like to see the downtown community do something to build rather than tear down.

JEK: Are there any factors you think over the time you've lived here that have contributed to the growth and development? Any factors I'm talking about -- the location, the . . . or transportation or anything that has really been significant that has either helped or hindered us?

SHIDELER: As you certainly well know, one of the most important /factors/ in a community to make it successful for manufacturing purposes was transportation. And, too, as you well know I'm sure, we were quite fortunate in the transportation facilities that we had here. We were east and west on the Pennsylvania railroad. We were east and west on the New York Central railroad. We were north and south on the C & E I railroad. We had the Milwaukee railroad going through here. This is a condition, too, that has gone down very rapidly. Passenger trains, why there are kids today that have never seen a passenger train, Joe. And from all indications the way things are going, they never will.

But, all of these things in my opinion go to make a community successful. The availability of necessary paraphernalia to get the job done. It can be done. I'm sure of that. It's going to take hard work for all of us. We're going to have to cooperate with each other and together. I hate to see us get involved in politics as a city such as has been going on here lately. I think this is too bad. There're reasons for everything, of course, but, by the same token, bad publicity in a community from wherever it comes is no good.

JEK: Hard to live down.

SHIDELER: Yes, sir! You bet your life it is hard to live down. And the unfortunate thing, too, Joe, too frequently it seems that there are those who take the attitude that it's a lot easier to be negative than positive.

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: We, the people.

JEK: Um hm.

Well, Speed, you're a very positive person. You've been positive in this community, and heavens, we wish we had many more like you. It's been a pleasure talking with you today. If you have any final comments you'd like to make, I offer you . . .

SHIDELER: Well, I'd just like to say to you, Joe, that it certainly is a nice feeling to have you put yourself out enough to come down here, and I presume say interview me. It's been a pleasure to try to give you the answers as you asked them.

I want to help, but I've already told you when I was born.

JEK: Right. (chuckles)

SHIDELER: I told you my age.

JEK: Yes. (chuckles)

SHIDELER: I'm not a kid. I can't do some of the things that I used to. There are others that are in the same boat that I'm in.

JEK: Maybe the example you've set though may encourage some of the younger folks in this community to get going.

SHIDELER: Well, I'd be glad to do anything I can personally to help out in any way at all. But this is what it's going to take. All of us working together. Like you talked about the library board and this sort of things. Beautiful new structures have gone up in Terre Haute in the last several years and past

SHIDELER: and past years as far as that's concerned. But the unfortunate thing, some of those so beautiful are not the fact that's going to help us build. They help the community. Don't misunderstand me. But as far as making progress from a business standpoint, they're just not that type of a business.

JEK: I see.

SHIDELER: Am I not correct?

JEK: Right.

SHIDELER: We got to keep our fingers crossed, hope for the best, do everything each of us can do to accomplish the things that we know should be done and that we'd like to see done, and get done.

JEK: Thank you, Speed Shideler.

SHIDELER: Thank you, Joe.

END OF TAPE

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